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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/909,087	07/20/2001	Thomas Paul Downs		9884

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EXAMINER

THOMAS, ALEXANDER S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1772

13

DATE MAILED: 03/20/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/909,087

Applicant(s)

DOWNS, THOMAS PAUL

Examiner

Alexander S. Thomas

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-5 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 2-5 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some.* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☒ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). 11.
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) ____.
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

1. Claims 2-5 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction (election) requirement in Paper No. 5. Applicant's election with traverse of Group I in a telephone interview is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that claim 1 is not divergent from the invention of claims 2-5 and that the invention of Group I, claim 1 is used with the invention of claims 2-5. This is not found persuasive because the enclosure is useable without the protective disc and is not claimed in combination with the protective disc.

The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

2. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. It is not clear whether the claims are directed to a protective disc per se or to the combination of a protective disc and a laser or enclosure disc. The phrase "an annular disc for use with laser discs and enclosure discs ..." implies that a protective disc per se is being claimed. However, the phrase "said protective disc having a radially ... coextensive with the diameter of a laser disc and enclosure disc" implies that the combination of a protective disc and either a laser disc or enclosure disc is being claimed. It is suggested that the first mentioned phrase be deleted in order to overcome this rejection.

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3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Drew ('320) in view of either Downs, Morgan et al or Prusak. The primary reference discloses a protective sheet for placement between laser disks comprising cotton fabric; see column 1, lines 41-45 of Drew. However this reference does not disclose the protective sheet as having an annular shape and a centrally disposed aperture. The secondary references each disclose protective layers for recording disks having an annular shape with a centrally disposed aperture; see the Figures. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to provide the cotton fabric sheet of the primary reference in an annular shape and with a centrally disposed aperture as taught by the secondary references in order to use the protective sheet to protect a stack of disks.

5. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Landin et al ('774). The reference discloses placing annularly shaped viscoelastic layers with a centrally disposed aperture adjacent laser disks; see column 5, lines 20-24 and column 11, lines 1-20. The viscoelastic layer may include a fiber mat or web and the fibrous layer may be formed from cotton; see column 7, lines 49-52 and column 8, lines 14-17. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to form the viscoelastic

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layer in the article of the reference from a cotton fiber mat in view of the teachings in the reference to provide a shock resistant disk.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander S. Thomas whose telephone number is 703-308-2421. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 6:00-3:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Harold Pyon can be reached on 703-308-4251. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-872-9310 for regular communications and 703-872-9311 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.

ALEXANDER S. THOMAS
PRIMARY EXAMINER

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March 18, 2003